

ALASKA COUNCIL ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES MINUTES

Thursday, April 19, 2007

Call to Order:

Chair Karen O'Neill, MD called the spring meeting of ACEMS to order at 8:35 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions:

ACEMS Members in Attendance:

Karen O'Neill, MD, Chair
Ron Bowers
John Dickens

David Hull
Roy Sursa
Soren Threadgill

State Section of Injury Prevention and EMS Staff in Attendance:

Tim Bundy, Section Chief
Kathy McLeron, EMS Unit Manager
Tariq Ali, Public Health Specialist
Martha Moore, Public Health Specialist

Shelley K. Owens, Public Health Specialist
Doreen Risley, Public Health Specialist
Tracy Solomon, Administrative Clerk

EMS Regional Staff in Attendance:

Sue Hecks, Executive Director, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.
Bobbi Leichty, Executive Director, Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc.
Dan Johnson, Executive Director, Interior Region EMS Council, Inc.
Lee Parham, YKHC Region
Aggie Jack, EMS Director, Maniilaq EMS
Dave Potashnick, EMS Regional Director, North Slope Borough Fire Department
Brent Clark, EMS Director, Norton Sound Health Corporation
Mike Motti, EMS Coordinator, South East Regional Health Corporation EMS
Terry Stone, EMS Coordinator, Kodiak Area Native Association
Sue Hecks, EMS Coordinator, Kenai Peninsula
Dave Abbott, EMS Coordinator, Copper River EMS Council

Liaison Representative Members in Attendance:

Frank Sacco, MD, Alaska Native Medical Center and American College of Surgeons; Ken
Zafren, MD, State EMS Medical Director, BJ Coopes, MD, Children's Hospital at Providence

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: To adopt the minutes from the September 21-22, 2006 meeting.

ACTION: Passed

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION: To adopt the agenda for April 19-20, 2007.

ACTION: Passed

Ethical Conduct Reminder (Karen O'Neill, MD)

Karen reminded members of the ethical rules.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Executive Committee Report (Karen O'Neill, MD)

ACEMS sent letters to Zoann Murphy and Kyla Hagan thanking them for their hard work and help to the PIE Committee. We sent letters of invitation to this meeting to Governor Sarah Palin, Commissioner Karleen Jackson, Director Dr. Jay Butler and State Legislators. Steve O'Connor is still recovering and he hopes to be at the next meeting.

EMS Medical Director's Report (Ken Zafren, MD)

Ken is a resource for medical directors and works on the Symposium clinical track with Doreen. He was very happy with the 2006 Symposium. Ron Pirrallo from Milwaukee talked about terrorism and medical direction and both topics were excellent. There was a presentation on Pediatric Trauma and Airways by Ian Neilson, a pediatric surgeon, and Pediatric Anesthesiologist Rob Smith talked about airways. Paul Jensen, a neurosurgeon, talked about back trauma and Dr. Jay Butler spoke on pandemic flu. Dr. Mike Levy did a fantastic job with a course for Medical Directors at the Symposium.

Expanded Scope is functioning well. Most of the requests are for renewals. The Cold Guidelines have been revised and are available. EMS for Children is going a great job working on credentialing facilities. Soren Threadgill is doing a great job as the Chair of the EMS Stroke Workgroup; the goal is to try to improve patient outcome.

ALMR Update & Discussion (Del Smith)

Del became the Operations Manager for ALMR on March 1, 2007, a new position. His job is to provide user assistance and representation to the 8,000 current users of the system. ALMR Operations and Maintenance is funded right now by the Department of Defense (DoD). ALMR sits on top of the State's telecommunications system that provides the connectivity for the system. State maintains the SATS for ALMR as well other state connectivity needs. By December 31, 2012 we have to go to narrow band width. There are no costs currently for the use of ALMR, but the vision is that if you bring infrastructure (i.e. DoD & SOA) to the system then you must maintain it. Individual agencies are obligated to buy their own subscriber units (radios). The beta agreement allows free use of the ALMR system at this time, but if costs come up later a new agreement will be necessary. What do you need to get on the system? Answer: software programmable P25 compliant subscriber units. The transportable system comes with 50 radios, more if needed and can be used in areas outside normal ALMR coverage in an emergency. No one is required to go on the system but goal is interoperability when needed.

Sue Hecks: We would like a full system analysis of the legacy and ALMR radio systems: where the system is, the communities that it serves, and the gaps. Who has the equipment and who needs it? Who is not intended to be on the system? We need to find maps of legacy system and ALMR system and projected maps of ALMR on build out. Will there be money in the budget to continue with the legacy system after ALMR comes into place?

Regional Directors and Coordinators Report (Sue Hecks)

RD&C met with Matt Leveque and Del Smith to discuss ALMR and offer kudos to Dave Hull and Jeff Tucker for their service on the User Council. EMS Unit staff presented updates on the regulations project, Poison Control Center funding, pandemic flu planning, the prehospital data project, EMT training, and updates on EMS-C, Rural AED, and Symposium. Other old business included discussions about expanded scope of practice, the status of pending state legislation, FY 2008 grants to regions and the BRU budgets, Mike Motti's Management Training project and NIMS compliance. New business items included fit test distribution, ETT barrier crimes and background checks, cancellation of EMS Day at the Legislature due to weather overflights, PCR retention schedules, and the POLST project.

Public Information and Education Committee Report (Dave Hull)

Thanks to the EMS office for sending out the EMS surveys with the recertification applications. Responses are coming in, and concerns expressed include:

- dislike of internal EMS politics within their organization
- time away from family
- questions about what the regional and state EMS offices do

We need to address this communication issue with our services. Ideas for doing so include preparation of an ACEMS brochure on how EMS works; updating the PIE web site; updating the EMT posters; and posting more recent EMT pictures on the website. The PIE Committee requests that ACEMS support funding for adopt a strong position of support for the Poison Control Center, which is currently in danger. The PIE Committee wants guidance on what ACEMS sees as the role of this committee.

Alaska Trauma Registry Report (Martha Moore/Tariq Ali)

Tariq Ali is stepping into Martha's position as the Trauma Registrar. The Trauma Registry vendor has developed a greatly enhanced version and we are looking at it to see if this is something we should move towards or not. Our goal is to receive data electronically from all of the hospitals including web-based data entry at the smaller hospitals. The data we have collected from the hospitals is current through 2006. We have put together a list of the 10 leading causes of non-fatal injuries that require hospitalization in Alaska. We want to be able to put this information on the internet so that more people can access it. The House and the Senate passed the Trauma Care Systems Planning Act in March of 2007. This program was reauthorized for \$12 million for the year 2008. The President now needs to sign it into law. We have been funding the Trauma System Review Committee meetings and some training from the Rural Hospital Flex grant. There are 24 hospitals in Alaska, 5 of which are designated trauma centers.

EMS Program Report (Kathy McLeron)

A draft of revised regulations still needs content review to be finalized. Some of the changes include renaming EMT-I, II, and III from Roman numerals to Arabic numbers. We are discussing a fee increase for each applicant. The new certification database has an expected launch date of 05/07/07. We are also trying to make more information available for instructors. NREMT has adopted computer based testing – now there are no more written NREMT exams. There are currently 3,436 certified EMTs in Alaska. 1,960 EMT-1s, 501 EMT-2s, and 649 EMT-3s. There has been an increase of 299 EMTs since 2001. You can now use the My Alaska website for information about EMS certification. We are trying to remove some of the barrier

crimes (misdemeanors) and ensuring that crimes that are barriers to certification are related to EMS job functions. For the last year and a half we have been doing court checks on every applicant. Some applicants have failed to report convictions. The safety of the public is the main issue. We have also been checking with CSED to see if people are compliant.

POLST Initiative and Discussion (Maria Wallington, MD)

The goal of the POLST form is to effectively communicate the wishes of seriously-ill patients about their medical treatment to ensure that they are honored. At this time there are several systems for communicating these wishes and it can be very confusing – what are we going to use (DNR, Comfort One, POLST, etc.)? Discussion ensued about the possible conflict between POLST and Comfort One; the difficulty in training providers about different forms and their applications; and the need for a database to cross reference names and addresses of patients with multiple orders.

Legislative Update and Discussion (Shelley Owens)

House Bill 36: “An act relating to the authority of registered nurses to assist in the training of persons who seek to become emergency medical technicians or mobile intensive care paramedics”. This bill concerns nurses who are involved in training paramedic students. It requires additional training for these nurses and requires the additional training must be approved by the Nursing board on how to train another person to perform invasive procedures and how to administer medications. Sue and Dan met with the bill Sponsor.

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Persons to be Heard

None

Recessed.

ALASKA COUNCIL ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES MINUTES

Friday, April 20, 2007

Call to Order

Grants to Regions Process/Timelines (Linda Hulse)

The projected timeline is to have the grant reviews out by May 31st; the first quarter payment out by July 15th and to close out FY07 grants between August 1st-15th. With the e-Grants system, a grantee can go online and check the status of their grant, balance remaining, and when payments have been made. There will be training on the system this fall.

ACEMS Liaison Member Report (Frank Sacco, MD)

Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention with Trauma Patients is now required by all Trauma Centers. Alcohol is one of the largest risk factors in trauma centers and emergency rooms. There are 30 studies that show that intervention at the time that they come in reduces recidivism by 50% over the next 1-2 years. When a patient has been drinking and comes in with an injury, 40% of them will return in the next 5 years, and 20% of them will die from injury. 80% of those deaths are related to alcohol. Our target should be people that aren't physically addicted to alcohol, but have drinking patterns that put them at risk. This intervention uses that "teachable moment" when they are in the hospital as a patient to help prevent future injuries. We need trauma centers to be involved in trauma prevention. The program is provided free by the College of Surgeons and the Tribal College programs.

We are still working on incentive legislation to develop a Trauma System in Alaska. It needs the support of ACEMS and the Nursing Association. A bill has passed the House and the Senate and if the President doesn't veto it there will be money for each state for trauma system development. The Trauma System Committee reviewed two level 4 hospitals, and two re-verifications that were successful. The American College of Surgeons is reviewing the verification criteria. ATLS training is doing very well; there are 5-6 courses a year in Alaska.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S & COORDINATOR'S REPORTS

Southeast Region Report (Bobbi Leichty)

We just celebrated our 30th anniversary and held our 25th annual Symposium. There were great speakers but attendance was very low (70 instead of 120-130). The next Symposium will be held in Wrangell next year. The goal of the SEREMS Board is to educate bush communities by taking the Symposium on the road. Crime Scene Investigation will be the theme, talking about child abuse and internet child pornography. Under the Code Blue Project we just ordered the 16th ambulance, 6th ground transport vehicle and our 3rd rescue boat. Sitka's Youth First Responder program is on its 3rd year. Mike Motti is writing a grant application to get funding to expand this program into eight additional communities in Southeast. Gregory Wong, EMT-3, will become the new Assistant Training Coordinator for SEREMS. An EMT-I textbook is in progress with EMT-II and III texts to follow. This is the 25th anniversary of Airlift Northwest.

Interior EMS Region Report (Dan Johnson)

IREMSC has been in existence 25 years. Our mission is primarily EMS training. We provide technical assistance to communities and help with equipment purchases. IREMSC has purchased

its own building and moved in August 1st. Symposium attendance was down 25% due to a conflict in mid-April with the Iron Man competition. Manley Hot Springs received Interior's first medical slide-in EMS vehicle. This improves our ability to train and serve our EMS responders. AST switched over to ALMR in May/June. Tok lacks the financial assistance to purchase ALMR-compatible radios. Dave: to be eligible for Homeland Security funds, an organization needs to be a non-profit corporation.

Southern Region Report (Sue Hecks)

Ronni Sullivan resigned as the Executive Director of Southern Region and Sue has replaced her. There are some new staff members as well. The Region has 49 ground ambulance services, 47 first responder services and 4 air medical services. Also we have 1,088 EMT-1s, 380 EMT-2s, 435 EMT-3s and 200 Paramedics. Code Blue is in its 7th phase with ambulances for Ninilchik and St. Paul, transport vehicles for Old Harbor and Perryville, and a new communications base station and repeater relocation for Seldovia. Kachemak received their ambulance in March and Cordova will receive theirs in May. Challenges we are facing as a non-profit organization include an increase in our lease costs and providing competitive wages and benefits to staff.

North Slope Borough Report (Dave Potashnick)

We provided 38 educational classes the quarter, including 15 CPR courses. The Borough-wide radio system study is nearing completion with a report to be out in about thirty days. This will allow implementation of real-time two-way communication between responders in the villages and dispatch in Barrow, as well as implementation of E-911 in the villages. ALMR won't be installed on the North Slope. Under Code Blue and Denali Projects the state previously awarded \$30,000 for the ambulances in the villages but the ambulances need to be replaced as they are becoming a maintenance problem. During 2006, with a Borough population of 7,500 people, there were 2000 emergency calls and 300 medevacs. Barrow, with 4500 people, had 500 calls. Each village will have two paid response personnel. Dr. Learner from Providence came up on her own time this year to help with an outbreak of RSV and influenza and to try and help us figure out what was going on in our villages. Oxygen generating systems have been funded for each of the villages.

Maniilaq Association Report (Aggie Jack)

The Region has a population of 74,000 in 12 villages spread out over 39,000 square miles. An additional 10,000 tourists travel in the Region between June and August. Our medevacs have increased from 167 to over 600 since 2003. EMS Week coming up in May which is a big event for our area. Arctic Care is in our area right now, they are going to be doing eye exams and providing glasses for free and other health activities. We had a Pandemic Flu workshop and Incident Command System (ICS) training for our personnel. We are very short-staffed. Aggie is now a Board member of the Native American EMS Association.

Norton Sound Report (Brent Clark)

Norton Sound Hospital was recently certified as a Level IV Trauma Center. We are very short staffed on our air ambulance and in teaching. Nome Volunteer Ambulance Dept. is also short staffed. Medevacs are increasing and will probably be 400 for the year. We are moving toward Phase 7 of Code Blue and have a communications study underway.

Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (Lee Parham)

Lee is new to the Corporation, from Las Vegas. The injury prevention team has been working on providing helmets for snow machines and bicycles. They only have three staff members, and are trying to hire another position. The Fire Department had 742 EMS ground runs in 2006 and 1500 air medical calls. They are working on completing Code Blue Phase 4 and 5. Code Blue Phase 7 communities are receiving their equipment. In September we will be having a Health Fair for the local area. All 41 villages have received their AEDs. We have a couple of bike rodeos scheduled to teach bike safety.

Injury Prevention Update (Deb Hull-Jilly)

The Family Violence Project is putting together training for communities. We would like to have family violence training for EMS responders to enhance the skills and knowledge about this issue. The Violent Death and Response Reporting System is in a two-year reporting analysis. In 2003-04 we had about 500 cases that were identified as a violent death. We are going to provide this information to everyone that should receive this information, with the help of ACEMS, so that we can improve our response to victims that are in these types of situations. The Child Passenger Safety Program has an enhanced education program now from the Alaska Highway Safety Office. This program will train the trainers in communities to better their skills. Our fire-related prevention program is distributing digital fire alarms that have the parent's recorded voice saying "Fire, fire get out!" The Poison Prevention Program wants to find ways to improve the "brown bag" project for the elderly. We are still working on helmet use with the communities and will be developing a PSA.

IPEMS Section Report (Tim Bundy)

Poison Control System

We need more funding for this Program. The Poison Center had almost 10,000 calls last year in the state of Alaska, of which over 7,200 were documented exposures. 1,733 people were admitted to a hospital. There were 677 attempted suicide calls during the year. Nationwide over 50% of calls involving human exposure are by children that are under six years old. In the State of Alaska this percentage is higher, at 58%; most of these calls are when children get into prescription medications. We also had 100 children under six that got into rat poison. We applied for a grant with the EPA but they only have one grant for the whole region and it went to Oregon. Since we didn't get the grant we will have to absorb this cost somehow. It takes about \$120,000 dollars a year to keep the Poison Control Program going. It costs the Poison Center about \$30 per call of which we paid \$19.

EMS Data Collection Project

We received funding for this project and are in the process of finalizing the Request for Proposals. There is enough money to set up a web-based system for data collection and to develop a training program and get it going. The idea of the project is to have an EMS agency enter the data and this data will populate the state database so that the hospitals and doctors can read the information. It takes less time to do data entry than it currently takes to write all the information in the patient care report form.

Health Planning/Systems Development (Pat Carr)

Pat described HRSA Grant/Flex Program funding for Critical Access Hospitals in rural communities, the National Rural Health Assn. meeting in Anchorage and publications HPSP has produced, including the Directory of Health Care Sites.

EMS for Children (Doreen Risley)

We are in the second year of a 3-year grant. One requirement is to have an advisory group; this group is composed of specified representatives. We are also working on pediatric facility recognition program, which examines pediatric-specific performance measures. These measures will define whether or not an emergency department is recognized for stabilization/care of pediatrics.

Code Blue Project (Doreen Risley)

USDA did not fund phase 6 of the Code Blue Project which impacted what we accomplished this year. Interior Region is the only Region that was funded through the USDA. We received \$425,000 in capital funding to match the USDA and local funding. We will be asking for this amount again next year. After talking to the Denali Commission we were able to get an additional \$637,000, this money is only available for the next two years. They are allowing us to use these funds for ALMR radios.

State EMS Symposium (Doreen Risley)

The dates are November 7-10, 2007. We will have the General Session on Saturday this year to get more people in. Doreen will be meeting with the Training Committee to find some other speakers. Randy Mantooth will be a presenter and will also be a judge for the Skills Competition.

EMS Training Committee Report (Mike Branum)

Mike has been working on the revision of the regulations with Kathy's help. The Training Committee will work on some of the supporting documents (e.g. curricula) at their meeting next week. The Alaska Shield/Northern Edge (AS/NE) exercise will be in the beginning of May. Last year Mike received training in Georgia as a Master Exercise Practitioner, which will enable him to help with the AS/NE meetings. Round I of Pandemic Flu Planning is completed.

NEW BUSINESS

Grants-to-Regions/BRUs

John raised the question of fiscal management of the State grants. Tim said Regions will be reminded to manage their funds in accordance with terms of their grant, and that the State office will investigate any specific complaint it receives.

Action Items (Karen O'Neill, MD)

- *MOTION:* To write a letter to the ALMR User Group regarding concerns and requesting an independent (non-vendor) systems analysis.
ACTION: Passed.
- *MOTION:* To write a letter to the Governor about the legacy radio system.
ACTION: Passed.

- *MOTION:* To write a letter to Rep. Kawasaki that ACEMS supports the authority of nurses to train Paramedics and EMTs as referenced in HB36.
ACTION: Passed
- *MOTION:* To write a letter to the Governor and Legislators supporting efforts to fund the development of trauma centers and address uncompensated care for trauma patients.
ACTION: Passed.
- *MOTION:* To write a letter supporting the “safe cigarette” bills (SB 84 and HB 131) and authorizing Dave to testify.
ACTION: Passed.
- *MOTION:* To write a letter to Mike Motti thanking him for developing the EMS Management Course.
ACTION: Passed.
- *MOTION:* To request Tim to send a reminder letter to grant recipients about the proper use of grants.
ACTION: Dave opposed, Motion Passed
- *MOTION:* To ask the Governor to reappoint Charlie Lean to ACEMS
ACTION: Passed
- *MOTION:* To abolish the inactive Prevention Committee and the Medical Director Recruitment and Retention Task Force, and reactivate in the future as needed
ACTION: Passed

Dates for next meeting

The Fall meeting will be held in Anchorage at Southern Region EMS Council on October 4 and 5, 2007. The Regional Directors & Coordinators will meet October 2, 2007, and the PIE Committee will meet on October 3, 2007.

Adjourned: 4:40 pm